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the Turanian family; just as those of Aryan descent are more distinguished by sculpture and architecture in general than by a universal appreciation and skill in using colour, especially in the minor decorative forms of Art."

Mr. J. Leighton, speaking of the progress made by the Japanese, and the sources of instruction open to them, gives them credit for having acquired some knowledge of linear perspective from the Dutch. In all probability they did. In one of the numerous sketch-books left by their celebrated artist Hokusai, and the school he founded in the last century, there is indeed a lesson in perspective, no doubt derived from some Dutch source only partially understood. (See Diagram No. 1.)

It will be seen that, although they had some knowledge of a

horizontal line passing through the field of a picture at the height of the eye of the spectator, they have not understood that the point of sight on that line is always opposite to it, and that all lines or visual rays in parallel perspective must go to the same point of sight; whereas, although the ascending and descending lines in both diagrams go to points on the horizontal line, they go to two or more points, some distance apart. As to points of distance out of the picture, to which all diagonal lines should go, they seem to be wholly ignorant. And so of vanishing points in oblique perspective. So in the next diagram (No. 2) they must have learned that in order to secure a pleasing effect the horizon must not be placed equidistant from the top and bottom of the picture, but one-third or two-fifths lower or higher, accord-

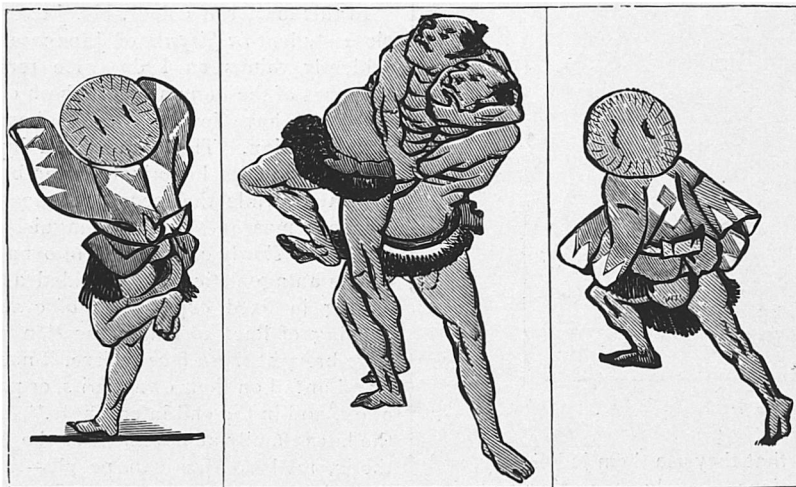


Fig. 6.

ing to circumstances, but never in the middle. That seems to have been the object of this lesson, defective like the other as to the point of sight.

Nevertheless, either by some rule, or more probably by eye, in drawing a circle, as the wheel of a cart, they put it into very fair perspective, as may be seen in the following example, taken from the same book (Fig. 3), in which the complicated piece of perspective is tolerably given. This is perhaps still more clearly exemplified in Fig. 4, representing a woman carding hemp. Of foreshortening in the human figure they have little knowledge, and yet often attempt to render it. Figs. 5 and 6 may be taken as examples, in which there is a fair degree of success. Though it must be confessed, therefore, at the outset, that in perspective and the drawing of the undraped human

figure they have little pretension to scientific accuracy, yet their success in each direction is considerable.

Upon the whole we must agree with Mr. Leighton, when he says that their inferiority in perspective, both linear and aerial, is "not without exceptions, for sometimes their linear perspective is nearly perfect, and their aerial perspective very beautiful, though they do not seem to understand the pictorial—that power of chiar-oscuro that makes a picture." Later he remarks, in a letter to me, referring to the same subject, "A work of Art need not be a picture, and a great deal of pictorial Art may exist without much elevated conception. I have no doubt that with their imitative powers, they will some day add perfect perspective and pictorial Art to their pictures, though in the process they may possibly lose some of the higher qualities practised in more primitive times."

AMERICAN PAINTERS.—BENJAMIN CURTIS PORTER.



BENJAMIN CURTIS PORTER, of Boston, made his mark in New York by sending to the Academy Exhibition of 1877 his "Portrait of a Lady, with Dog." No previous or subsequent work of his is so noteworthy as this in quality. The lady stands leaning gracefully upon the back of a high chair, on which is seated a pertinacious, staring, full-blooded pug-dog, whose ugliness is in eloquent contrast to the refined and classic beauty of the woman. The motive of the representation had the disadvantage of being considered by some spectators to be a little stagy. Other persons preferred the dog to the woman; others still liked the attitude of the woman best of all; but the picture, as a whole, met with popular and academic recognition. It was full of delicate realisation and of linear grace; in its treatment there was neither baldness nor artificiality; and if, as a piece of character-painting, it was somewhat wanting in depth

and precision, in evidences of artistic insight at the disposal of a brush used to the rendition of difficult and subtle phases of psychologic interest, it possessed other merits sufficient to entitle it to intelligent respect, and to justify the frequently-expressed wish to buy it.

Mr. Porter, who was born in Melrose, Massachusetts, August 27, 1843, has the advantage—or disadvantage—of having studied regularly under no master. Contrary to the usual practice, he did not enter any Art-school, nor the studio of any painter, nor did he receive set lessons in painting. He went to Boston early in life, and picked up, as chance or inclination threw them in his way, the principles of his profession. In 1872, when twenty-nine years old, he spent six months in Europe, principally in Paris and in Venice; but, although he studied considerably, he attached himself to no particular artist. In 1875 he again spent six months in those cities; and in May, 1878, made his third trip across the Atlantic.

One morning in that month he was in the east room of the National Academy in New York, putting some turpentine on the portrait of Mrs. T. F. Cushing, of Boston, on exhibition there, the varnish of which had "bloomed," as the painters say.

This picture, while not scoring an advance on the "Portrait of a Lady, with Dog," has nevertheless several commendable features. Mrs. Cushing is represented life-size, and descending a flight of

stairs. The background, perhaps, is too florid, and the figure is not remarkable, either for the purity of its flesh-tints or for its relief. The chief fault is a straining after the vividly picturesque; yet Mr. Porter doubtless would not be insensible to the beauty of a grave and simple portrait like that of Professor Robert W. Weir by Mr. J. Alden Weir, in the same exhibition, where the self-abnegation of the artist, the utter absence of any effort for display, the dignity



The Hour-Glass.—From a Painting by Benjamin Curtis Porter.

and almost severe reserve, are obvious. In the case of Mr. Porter's picture, however, the demands of the subject were different from those felt by Mr. Weir; the two portraits have little in common, and cannot properly be compared with each other. Mr. Porter's aims in portraiture are not at all those of the new French school, nor of any foreign school. Like Mr. Daniel Huntington, Mr. George A. Baker, the late Mr. Henry Peters Gray, and other eminent American artists, he is extremely sensitive to the pictorial

possibilities of his sitters. He considers it to be the duty of a portrait-painter to make a picture while producing a portrait, and he would probably think little of a verisimilitude which was not conditioned by pictorial necessities. Ingenuity of composition, arrangement of accessories, choice of local colours—the dress and ornaments that his sitter wears, and the place and surroundings where she sits—are matters of prime importance in his eyes. He desires something more than a perfect and sober veracity, and his

portraits usually please the general spectator, not less than the friends of the persons whom he has placed upon the canvas.

Mr. Porter is a young man yet, and his future is attractive. In Boston, he has wrought out an enviable reputation, and in some respects his portraits rank as the very best which that city can produce. He is a figure-painter also, and "The Mandolin-Player"

and "The Hour-Glass," engraved herewith, adequately represent his skill in this kindred department. The former is in the possession of Mrs. George D. Howe, of Boston. The latter was in the New York Academy Exhibition of 1877, where its excellences, though generally recognised, were partly eclipsed by those of the "Portrait of a Lady, with Dog," which hung in the same room,



The Mandolin-Player.—From a Painting by Benjamin Curtis Porter.

and in a much more favourable position. Near a woman with a lute in her lap is Cupid holding an hour-glass. The gracefulness of the invention, the skill of the drawing, and the suave blending of the tints, are noticeable.

The originality is unquestionable, and the same is true, in general, of Mr. Porter's compositions. Even the critic of the London *Academy*, who, in the American section of the Paris Exhibition, finds that "nearly every work of above average merit has been

executed in a French *atelier*;" that, "as a rule, the subjects of the works exhibited are furnished by Europe;" and that, "if by chance the manners and customs of the United States are dealt with, there is no trace of anything like special national character in their treatment," could scarcely have failed to notice an exception in Mr. Porter's portrait now in that Exhibition. Last spring the artist received the honour of an election as Associate of the National Academy of Design.